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S E C R E T

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12 September 1966

DCI BRIEFING FOR  
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COMMUNIST CHINA

- I. The internal political scene in Communist China has been marked by turmoil and disarray for many months now. All of the indications are that the situation is still unstable, and there may be further upheavals.
  - A. For the past month, mobs of rampaging teenagers of the so-called Red Guard have kept the country in a state of disorder
    1. They have been roaming the streets of all major Chinese cities, harassing suspected enemies of the regime and occasionally beating them up.
    2. There have been a few reports of extensive violence and bloodshed, but for the most part the Red Guard's appear to be a disciplined and well-controlled organization.
    3. In the past week their activities have subsided somewhat.
  - B. The destructive antics of these teenagers have tended to divert public attention from far more important developments

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within the party leadership. It appears to us that the top power structure of the party is undergoing its most massive shake-up in the history of the Chinese Communist regime.

(BRIEFING BOARD, CHICOM LEADERSHIP)

II. Last month, massive demonstrations in Peking on the 18th and 31st of August featured what appears to be a new line-up of the party's top policy-making body, the politburo.

A. Mao Tse-tung still dominates the leadership, but Defense Minister Lin Piao has taken the place of Mao's long-time deputy, Liu Shao-chi.

1. Liu has been the titular chief of state. There has been no announcement that he has lost that position, and he is still a member of the politburo, but he has been dropped ignominiously from second to eighth place.

B. As for Mao himself, we are not sure just how much control he still exercises over day-to-day events, or how long he will last.

1. He was completely out of public view

last winter and spring for nearly six months, and we are convinced that he was seriously ill for at least part of that period.

2. Peking propaganda has been working hard to portray Mao as a healthy man--capable, for instance, of long swims in the Yangtze river. Foreign visitors who saw him this summer, however, say that he did not look well at all.

3. A competent medical doctor who saw Mao has reported that he had the appearance of a man recovering from a serious illness or an operation.

III. Mao's new deputy, Lin Piao, is not in much better health.

A. Lin is one of the youngest men in the politburo at 59, but he has been ill for much of the past 30 years, probably with tuberculosis.

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This would still mean that he must limit his working hours, rest a great deal, and take long vacations, in order to prevent a recurrence.

2. His life expectancy is probably not much more than five years.

IV. Mao, however, appears to have chosen Lin to be his successor in spite of Lin's frailty. We think this must reflect Mao's growing mistrust of other elements of the leadership.

A. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the recent changes has been the break-up of the group of leaders which had been running the party machinery for the past decade.

1. Liu Shao-chi was the leading member of that group.
2. Many other members have been demoted or dismissed, including Peng Chen, another senior politburo member and the Mayor of Peking; the party propaganda chief, Lu Ting-i; and the man responsible for the secret police, Lo Jui-ching.

B. Military leaders close to Lin, and government figures like Chou En-lai have risen in importance.

V. For many years now, it had appeared to us that the leaders of the party machinery--men like Liu Shao-chi--enjoyed Mao's full trust.

- A. They not only had a long record of personal loyalty to Mao; their radical approach was also in accord with his.
- B. This situation presents us with a puzzling contradiction, especially in regard to its policy implications:
1. Mao is apparently intent on pushing through a radical program to reshape Chinese society. It appears to be so radical that the party rank-and-file could not be trusted to carry it out. The Red Guard had to be created.
  2. There is, therefore, no satisfactory explanation for Mao's willingness to turn against his old comrades who appeared to share his radical views.
  3. The government administrators and economic specialists who have been retained or even promoted--men like Chou En-lai, Chen Yun, and Li Fu-chun--are the relatively moderate members of the politburo.
  4. Yet these moderates are now the men who presumably will be helping Mao and Lin Piao to implement the radical program.

VI. As I have said, the situation appears to be highly unstable. The events of the past ten months must

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have intensified the antagonisms and mistrust among those leaders who have survived the purge.

- A. The possibility has increased that when Mao finally does go, the succession will be disorderly, and marked by factional struggles and bloody purges.
- B. It is also far from clear whether or not the new leaders are going to institute any major changes in domestic or foreign policy.
- C. There has, however, been no change in the basic hard-line nature of the men at the top. As a result, we foresee no abrupt change in Peking's policy of implacable hostility toward the United States.

(FOREIGN POLICY)

- I. In general, the Peking leaders have been so pre-occupied with troubles at home that they have been marking time on foreign policy.

Vietnam

- II. On Vietnam, Peking continues to repeat its familiar hard line. At the same time, the Chinese are carefully avoiding any expansion of their commitment to help the North Vietnamese.

A. The first U. S. attacks on North Vietnam's POL storage facilities on June 29th provided a short-lived barrage of propaganda.

1. Peking tried to convey the impression that China was more determined than ever to assist Hanoi in resisting this new escalation.

2. But the Chinese declarations of "resolute support" for the Vietnamese did not exhibit the ring of enthusiasm that had marked similar statements on the subject a year ago. The emphasis was on self-reliance by the Vietnamese.

B. Peking, however, appears to be just as determined as ever that the North Vietnamese must continue the war.

1. After the September 7th meeting of the U.S. and Chinese Communist ambassadors in Warsaw, the Chinese Ambassador released a statement attacking what he called the "U.S. peace talks swindle."

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2. Ambassador Wang reiterated Peking's adamant opposition to negotiations on Vietnam, and asserted once again that China--"the great rear area"--would support Hanoi's struggle against the U.S. to the end.

Sino-Soviet Relations

- III. The Sino-Soviet dispute has flared up again, but there is no indication that this marks a significant change in relations between the two countries.
  - A. Mass demonstrations by Red Guards outside the Soviet Embassy in Peking on August 29th and 30th were evidently intended as a reply to a Soviet diplomatic note delivered on August 26th which had protested earlier "acts of hooliganism" committed by the Red Guards in the vicinity of the embassy.
    1. The Chinese took care, however, to prevent the thousands of people who took part in the demonstrations from getting out of hand and damaging the Soviet Embassy.

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2. This suggests that Peking is not willing to push the Soviets too far.

B. Peking's most recent blast at Moscow was a People's Daily article on September 8th which accused Moscow of collaborating with the U.S. to "sell out the Vietnamese."

1. The article called the Soviets "renegades," "termites of the working class," and "scum in the revolutionary ranks."

Pakistan

IV. Peking has continued to supply military assistance to Pakistan, including MIG aircraft, tanks and artillery. China's willingness to provide this equipment demonstrates the value Peking puts on its ties with Rawalpindi.

A. The Chinese apparently see this aid as the price they must pay to keep alive a marriage of convenience which is based largely on a common antipathy to India.

1. They believe that their military aid will increase the tension between Pakistan and India.

B. The Chinese also know that their support causes strains between Ayub and the

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United States, and complicates Soviet efforts to follow up the Tashkent declaration and increase Moscow's influence in the sub-continent.

North Korea

- V. China has lost considerable ground to the Soviet Union in North Korea.
- A. The Korean Communists, long among Peking's staunchest supporters, have been edging toward Moscow recently. They are increasingly critical of certain Chinese policies, particularly those dealing with Vietnam.
- B. Peking and Pyongyang have avoided attacking each other publicly by name, but the growing coolness in relations was pointed up at the ceremonies in July marking the fifth anniversary of the Chinese-Korean treaty of friendship and mutual assistance.
- C. Pyongyang's clearest and most explicit public declaration of independence from Peking came on August 12, when Nodong Sinmun endorsed Moscow's call for united bloc action on Vietnam.

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1. The North Korean paper scolded those who criticize a party's "independent attitude" as "neutralism" or "opportunism"--an obvious jab at the Chinese Communists.

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(MILITARY POTENTIAL)

- I. To take a brief look at Communist Chinese military potential--There is considerable evidence that China is trying to develop advanced weapons just as fast as it can.
  - A. Communist China lags far behind the industrialized nations of the world in major fields of science and technology. The Chinese are not going to have these advanced weapons systems ready overnight, no matter what priority they give them.
  - B. Nevertheless, the Chinese have been able to detonate three nuclear devices and undertake the development of a medium-range ballistic missile.
    1. They have done this by allocating a major share of all scientific resources to the weapons programs.
    2. This has seriously retarded the growth of a strong technical base for the broader needs of the economy.
- II. The Chinese military modernization program is still in its early stages.
  - A. For several years to come, the military power of Communist China will derive

primarily from the numerical strength of its enormous ground forces--about 3,000,000 men--and its tremendous reserves of manpower.

- B. The army has demonstrated its ability to move and fight with primitive transportation and logistic support.
- C. If the Chinese were not faced with major opposition from a great power, they could probably quickly overrun any of their mainland neighbors in Southeast Asia or Korea.
- D. If it came to all-out warfare against any modern military machine, however, the Chinese would be badly hampered by shortages of armor, heavy ordnance, mechanized transport, and POL.

II. The Chinese Air Force and Navy are oriented primarily toward defense.

- A. The bulk of the jet fighter force consists of 1,600 MIG-15s and MIG-17s which were obtained 10 years ago or even earlier.
  - 1. In the past two years, however, the Chinese have begun assembling MIG-19s in a Shenyang aircraft plant which was supplied by the Soviet Union before 1960.

2. As a result, the Chinese Communists have not only been able to supply MIG-19s to Pakistan, but have increased their own holdings of this high-performance, twin-engine jet from 150 aircraft to about 350.
- B. The Chinese are continuing to place a high priority on the construction of submarines.
    1. The Chinese Communist Navy now has 26 submarines of the medium-range W or R-class. Two or three new units will probably be built each year for the next few years.

Deployment in South China

- IV. Because of the possibility of Chinese involvement in the Vietnamese war, we of course watch the South China border area very carefully for any signs of a ground force build-up there.
  - A. There are already about 480,000 troops in South China, but they have been there for some time, and only about 100,000 are near the North Vietnamese border.
    1. There has been no evidence so far of any significant build-up.
  - B. Peking has, however, sent a considerable force of engineer and support units into North Vietnam.

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1. These units are there to help maintain Hanoi's lines of communication with China and the Soviet Union.
2. We don't know exactly how many are in North Vietnam, but we estimate somewhere between 25,000 and 45,000.
3. Needless to say, we watch their activities as closely as possible.

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VIETNAM

- I. The Free World forces in South Vietnam are continuing to maintain the pressure on the Communists which has so far prevented the development of a major Viet Cong offensive during the monsoon season.
  - A. We have been able to launch a series of successful "spoiling operations"--- attacks in force into areas where the enemy has been trying to concentrate forces for large-scale actions.
    1. These operations have not only kept the Communists off balance, but have inflicted heavy casualties.
    2. One good example was Operation Hastings, carried out in July in northern Quang Tri Province. U. S. Marines and South Vietnamese regulars attacked units of the 324-B Division of the North Vietnamese army, which had infiltrated directly across the Demilitarized Zone.

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3. In an operation continuing from July 7 to August 2, the allied forces killed 882 men--by actual body count--and many more were probably killed by tactical air strikes. The North Vietnamese units were forced back into the demilitarized zone.

B. This action, of course, did not destroy the North Vietnamese division, which has possibly 7,000 men. As a matter of fact, our latest intelligence indicates that the 324-B division, together with other North Vietnamese units, is again concentrating in and immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone for another attempt to launch operations.

1. Operation Hastings, however, demonstrates how the allied tactics have been able to disrupt the Communist timetable.

2. These spoiling operations have been successful largely because the allied forces have such great mobility, and because of the constant improvement in the intelligence on enemy dispositions and moves.

C. Since late July, there have been no engagements as extensive as Hastings.

1. The allied forces, however, have been maintaining the pressure with 10 to 15 operations a day in battalion strength or greater.
  2. These probing operations have led to a number of small but sharp engagements which have cost the Communists an average of about 1,550 men killed per week.
- D. In most of the encounters this spring and summer, the enemy has not chosen to stand and fight, as he did in the Ia Drang Valley battle in Pleiku Province last November.
- II. The Communists have been taking heavy casualties--- the body count for the first eight months this year already exceeds the 35,400 killed in 1965.
- A. The rate of infiltration from North Vietnam, however, is also greatly increased. Apparently the Viet Cong are also calling up a larger number of their regional guerrillas for the main forces.
1. The Communist main force now has more than 106,000 men in combat units--158 battalions.
  2. This includes about 50,000 men in regular formations of the North Vietnamese army.

3. We believe that there are 19 North Vietnamese and 13 Viet Cong regiments.
- B. Many of the 158 enemy battalions operate as independent battalions, or in even smaller units. There are, however, at least [REDACTED] which are capable of pulling battalions and regiments together for concerted Communist attacks on a major scale.
- C. This means that the enemy retains a significant capability for large-scale operations, as well as a high level of small actions against isolated outposts and smaller allied units.
- D. There is no indication that there has been any radical change in the overall Communist strategy. That is to attack in force wherever the terrain and other factors are strongly to their advantage, and where they believe they can achieve victories at the smallest possible cost.

(SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION)

- I. As for the political situation in South Vietnam, the military government of Premier Ky continues to maintain the relatively stable position it has enjoyed since overcoming the Buddhist "struggle"

movement last spring.

- A. Most recently, of course, the election held last Sunday has been the center of attention. The outcome appears likely to enhance the stability of the regime.
- B. The identities of those elected to the constituent assembly have no particular bearing; the significant facts are that more than five and a quarter million people registered to vote, and that more than 80 percent of those registered actually cast their ballots.
- C. This would appear to be an excellent performance in the light of a call by the more militant of the Buddhist leaders for a boycott, and threats by the Viet Cong against candidates and voters.
  1. Incidents of terrorism and harassment by the Viet Cong were five times as high on Election Day as on a normal day. In general, however, the voting took place without serious incidents.
  2. There may have been some padding of the rural vote, but observers throughout the country found no evidence of official coercion, fraud, or other rigging.

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- D. The government, of course, made an all-out security effort to prevent Viet Cong disruption of the election, but the voter turn-out at least indicates that in areas where there is a government presence there is less fear of the Viet Cong, and probably less sympathy for their cause.
- E. As for the failure of the Buddhist appeal for the faithful to abstain from voting, it points up the weakness in secular matters of the militants around Thich Tri Quang who at present control the policies of the Buddhist Institute.
- II. There are some internal strains within the military government which might ultimately cause trouble as the time approaches for the installation of an elected government under the new constitution now to be drafted.
- A. These strains, however, in large part do not reflect a refusal by the military to go along with the constitutional process.
1. They reflect instead the rivalry of some senior military commanders with Premier Ky, and their fear that Ky might dismiss them.

2. There have also been indications of some complaints by some junior officers objecting to alleged corruption of their superiors.
3. None of these strains, however, appear so serious or so widespread as to threaten Ky's position at this time.

(NORTH VIETNAM)

- I. As for North Vietnam, the Hanoi leaders appear as determined as ever to continue the war. They have rejected all attempts by third parties to get negotiations started.
- II. The level of air strikes against North Vietnam has expanded considerably during the past several months.
  - A. The major targets are North Vietnamese lines of communication, and their POL facilities.
  - B. The North Vietnamese continue, however, to be able to move enough men and supplies through Laos into South Vietnam to maintain the operations of the Communists in the South.
- III. We have obtained more and more evidence in recent months of the extent to which Hanoi is running-- and taking part in--the war in South Vietnam.
  - A. Captured documents and the interrogation of prisoners have now identified the man who

is running the entire Communist war effort in South Vietnam. He is Nguyen Chi Thanh, ( \*NNGWEEN CHEE TAHN ) a politburo member of the North Vietnamese Communist Party.

1. Thanh is a general in the North Vietnamese Army, and has been its political commissar. He left North Vietnam to take over operations in the South early in 1965.
2. His two principal deputies are also both generals in the North Vietnamese Army, and members of the central committee of the North Vietnamese Communist Party.
3. One of them, the military deputy, is Tran Van Tra, who used to be deputy chief of staff of the North Vietnamese Army. Now, under the alias of Tran Nam Trung, he is listed as chief of the military affairs committee of the so-called National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam.
4. The deputy who runs the Communist political organization in South Vietnam is General Tran Do.

B. That is a good sample of how little identification

the National Front for the Liberation  
of South Vietnam actually has with the  
people of South Vietnam.

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SOVIET POLICIES IN ASIA

- I. Moscow's new leaders have significantly improved Soviet fortunes in Asia.
  - A. Moscow has modified its tactics in the Sino-Soviet dispute and reasserted itself in Vietnam, in order to regain ground lost to China during the Khrushchev years.
  - B. The Brezhnev - Kosygin regime has replaced Khrushchev's collision course with China, adopting a more subtle, non-polemical, and reasonable style. This has provided a striking contrast to China's increasingly belligerent and dogmatic approach.
  - C. Moscow's new tactic has been vindicated, most recently by what you might call the North Korean "declaration of independence," and by the growing strains between the Japanese Communists and Peking.

- II. Premier Kosygin's trip to Hanoi in February of 1965 was the first step in Moscow's attempt to reclaim its past influence in North Vietnam.
- A. Since then, the Soviets have worked to enhance their "revolutionary" image and to rebuild their presence in Vietnam by giving Hanoi sizable quantities of economic aid and by bolstering Hanoi's defensive capabilities.
  - B. The USSR, while working for a larger role in shaping events in Vietnam, has at the same time displayed relative caution and restraint. In particular, it has taken care not to risk a direct confrontation with the US.
- III. The Soviet leadership will undoubtedly favor a negotiated settlement, if and when Hanoi does.
- A. As long as the North Vietnamese continue to demonstrate their opposition to peace talks, however, Moscow is unwilling to take any initiatives itself--for example, in its capacity as a co-chairman of the Geneva Conference.
  - B. The USSR is going to be very careful that the influence it has just acquired in Hanoi is not again lost to the Chinese. As a result,

the Soviets will seek negotiations only when they are explicitly asked by Hanoi to make such a move.

- IV. The Soviets are winning points in the Communist world by capitalizing on China's intransigence and increasing dogmatism. Moscow is also working in the non-Communist world to secure greater influence at Chinese expense.
- A. Moscow has demonstrated its intent to provide an effective counterweight to China in Asia, particularly during the past year.
1. Soviet "good offices" at Tashkent last January revealed real Russian apprehension that further discord in South Asia would be exploited by Peking.
  2. The Soviets recently also expressed a readiness to renew aid to the volatile Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia, in an effort to offset Chinese inroads in Phnom Penh.
- B. The dramatic setback to Chinese prestige in Indonesia could also turn out to be a plus for Moscow, even though the posture of the new leadership in Djakarta has been against Communism no matter what its origin.

1. The Soviet leaders may be concerned that the Indonesian military leaders are turning too far toward the West. They are probably pleased, however, that Indonesia's pro-Peking drift has been halted, and that the pro-Chinese voice of the big Indonesian Communist Party has been silenced.
  2. The Kremlin probably hopes that it has enough leverage to keep Indonesia relatively neutral through the sizable Soviet investment in the Indonesian military. This accounts for more than one billion dollars of the Indonesian foreign debt.
  3. Privately the Soviets were probably also pleased with the end of the Malaysian "confrontation." This frees Moscow to establish its own presence in Malaysia and Singapore. Recent trade talks in Singapore bear this out.
- V. The Soviet interest in establishing strong influence in Hanoi has to a certain extent limited similar efforts in a number of countries, particularly Laos.

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- A. This was revealed most recently during the trip to the USSR of the Laotian King and the neutralist Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma.
1. Moscow initially displayed interest in good relations with Vientiane. However, the Prime Minister's very cool reception in Moscow made it apparent that the Soviets were unwilling to risk alienating Hanoi.
  2. The North Vietnamese, speaking through Pathet Lao propaganda outlets, had become increasingly abusive of the neutralist leader and his government.
  3. Moscow has frequently protested support given the US effort in Vietnam by both Laos and Thailand.
- B. Vietnam will continue to be the fulcrum of Soviet policies in Southeast Asia.